

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 OPR-02 A-01 CU-02 IO-10 IGA-01 AID-05 NSCE-00

SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 /100 W
----- 089014

P R 281247Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4103

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

DIA WASHDC

MACTHAI BANGKOK THAI/J-3

CDR USSAG NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3798

SINGAPORE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, PINT, LA, US

SUBJECT: NEGOTIATIONS ON AGREEMENT FOR RESTORATION OF
USAID COMPOUND

REF: A) VIENTIANE 3777 (NOTAL)

B) STATE 123203 (AIDAC, NOTAL)

SUMMARY. THIS TELEGRAM RECOUNTS ATMOSPHERE AND SUB-
STANCE OF ALL-DAY NEGOTIATIONS MAY 27 WHICH RESULTED
IN AGREEMENT FOR RESTORATION OF USAID COMPOUND TO
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MISSION'S CONTROL. FOR CONVENIENCE, ACCOUNT IS CAST

IN FIRST-PERSON PLURAL. THIS MESSAGE ALSO RESPONDS TO AID/W QUESTIONS REGARDING AGREEMENT WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN REF B. END SUMMARY.

1. ATMOSPHERICS. CHARGE ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF (JOHNSON) AND USISOFF (DAKS) (WHO ACTED AS LAO-ENGLISH INTERPRETER) MET WITH MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND PLAN SOTH PHETRASY (WHO IS ALSO LPF CO-CHAIRMAN OF JCCIA) AT 1020, MAY 27 TO DISCUSS DRAFT AGREEMENT WE HAD RECEIVED (IN LAO) AT 1730, MAY 26, AND OUR REVISED VERSION OF IT, WHICH WE GAVE HIM IN LAO AND FRENCH. MINISTER'S CHEF DE CABINET KHAMMING SAIGNAKONE ALSO PARTICIPATED. DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN LAO, FRENCH AND ENGLISH. AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR REPRESENTATIVES OF DEMONSTRATORS ARRIVED IN OUTER OFFICE AND KHAMMING STARTED SHUTTLEING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN US. CHARGE SUGGESTED THEY BE INVITED IN. ALL PARTICIPANTS THEN (1210) SAT AROUND MINISTER'S CONFERENCE TABLE. THERE WERE NINE DEMONSTRATORS, CLAIMING TO REPRESENT A GREAT MANY ORGANIZATIONS MOST NOTABLY THE STUDENTS, USAID EMPLOYEES AND "WORKERS."

2. THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE LED BY KHAMMING SOURINTHONG, PRESIDENT OF THE LAO STUDENT FEDERATION, WHO WAS WEARING WELL-TAILORED PEASANT GARB AND HO CHI MINH SANDALS AND APPEARED TO BE TOTING A PISTOL. VIXAI SAMAKAN, AN APPARENTLY UNHINGED USAID EMPLOYEE, ALSO TOOK A LEADING ROLE. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF GENERAL STATEMENTS IT WAS AGREED WE WOULD ADJOURN (IT WAS THEN 1315) AND GATHER AGAIN AT 1430 SO AS TO ALLOW THE STUDENTS TIME TO STUDY OUR DRAFT.

3. AT 1430 WE STARTED A MINUTE, POINT-BY-POINT, OR MORE EXACTLY WORD-BY-WORD, DISCUSSION OF THE TEXTS. THE STUDENTS TOOK THE LEAD AND SOTH ONLY INTERVENED FROM TIME TO TIME TO CLEAR UP A POINT OR SUGGEST LANGUAGE. THEY IN NO WAY DEFERRED TO HIM. THE STUDENT GROUP HAD CHANGED FROM THE EARLIER SESSION, THOUGH THE LEADERS WERE STILL THERE. THE DISCUSSIONS FOR THE MOST PART WERE NOT UNFRIENDLY. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, A LARGE, LITERALLY HOWLING MOB OUTSIDE AND IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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EVIDENT THAT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE WITHOUT AN AGREEMENT. THE PRESS, BOTH LAO AND FOREIGN, WAS ALSO THERE IN LARGE NUMBERS. THE SESSION WENT ON UNTIL 1900 WHEN WE HAD ARRIVED AT APPARENT AGREEMENT.

4. WE AGREED TO MEET AGAIN AT 2000. IN THE MEANTIME, THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD BE TYPING UP THE LAO TEXT. WHEN WE LEFT THE MINISTER'S OFFICE WE WERE MET BY THE

PRESS AND THE MOB, BUT WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE BY THE PRESS AND THE MOB, BUT WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE BY THE LATTER AFTER SOTH GAVE HIS PERSONAL ASSURANCE THAT WE WOULD RETURN.

5. WHEN WE RETURNED AT 2000, ACCOMPANIED BY A USAID OFFICER FLUENT IN LAO (HUXTABLE), THE CROWD OUTSIDE HAD DISPERSED BUT THE GROUP INSIDE THE OFFICE HAD GROWN TO TWENTY-FIVE OR SO AND INCLUDED SOUBANH SRITHIRATH, CHEF DE CABINET OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO TRANSLATED TEXT INTO FRENCH, ACTED AS MASTER OF CEREMONIES AND WAS GENERALLY HELPFUL. WE HAD AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE THREE TEXTS: ENGLISH, LAO AND FRENCH, WITH THE FRENCH AS THE REFERENCE TEXT. EVERYONE SET TO WORK GRINDING THEM OUT. WORKING FROM THE LAO, SOUBANH PRODUCED THE FRENCH AND THE USIS OFFICER THE ENGLISH. SOTH FOR THE MOST PART SAT AT HIS DESK AND TRIED TO CATCH UP ON HIS REGULAR WORK. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS FAIRLY FRIENDLY, BUT ONCE AGAIN A CROWD GATHERED OUTSIDE. DURING THE PROCEEDINGS, SOMEONE WHO APPEARED TO BE LPF CAMERAMEN CAME IN AND TOOK MOVING AND STILL PICTURES. AT ABOUT 2330 ALL TEXTS HAD BEEN PRODUCED AND AGREED UPON. THE PRESS SURGED IN, AND IN THE GLARE OF KLIEG LIGHTS THE DOCUMENT WAS SIGNED. WE FILED OUT THROUGH THE PRESS AND HAPPY CROWD AND RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY.

6. FOR THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE AMERICAN MISSION THE ATMOSPHERE AT THE MINISTRY OF THE PLAN WAS DECIDEDLY UNFRIENDLY MUCH OF THE DAY. UPON REACHING THE MINISTRY, THE CHARGE'S DRIVER QUIETLY TURNED OVER THE CAR KEYS TO THE EMBASSY OFFICER. LATER HE ABANDONED THE CAR BECAUSE THE CROWD WAS CALLING HIM AN "IMPERIALIST
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LACKEY" AND THREATENING TO KILL HIM. OTHER EMBASSY AND USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEES EXPRESSED FEAR WHEN ASKED IF THEY WOULD JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO HELP REVIEW THE LAO TEXT AGREEMENTS. SOTH PHETRASY, WHO OTHERWISE SAID LITTLE, MADE THE POINT THAT MISSION REPRESENTATIVES WERE ABLE TO DEPART BETWEEN 1900 AND 2000 HOURS ONLY BECAUSE HE HAD GUARANTEED THEY WOULD RETURN.

7. STUDENT POWER WAS CLEARLY SHOWN WHEN, AFTER THE CHARGE IN ATTEMPTING TO ILLUSTRATE OUR WILLINGNESS TO TURNOVER OF MAJOR AID ASSETS TO THE PGNU USED THE EXAMPLE OF A NUMBER OF MEDICAL WAREHOUSES THAT HAD BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE LPF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EARLIER THAT DAY. IMMEDIATELY, ONE STUDENT NEGOTIATOR PRODUCED

THE TWO LARGE RINGS OF KEYS THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE
MINISTRY DURING THE TRANSFER CEREMONY. (HE LATER TOLD
CHARGE HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.)

8. THE AGREEMENT: IN PARA 1, STICKING POINT WAS
DEMONSTRATORS' ORIGINAL INSISTENCE THAT IT SHOULD READ
THAT USAID HAD BEEN DISSOLVED AS OF MAY 24. WE POINTED
OUT THAT THIS WAS PATENTLY NOT TRUE. IT STILL EXISTED
BUT WAS IN PROCESS OF DISSOLUTION. HOW WOULD EMPLOYEES
BE PAID IF USAID NO LONGER EXISTED? HAPPILY, AFTER
MUCH HAGGLING, SOTH PRODUCED COPY OF OUR MAY 24 LETTER

"lost data"

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